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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 11/05/09

INDEX:

- 1) Top headlines
- 2) Editorials
- 3) Prime Minister's daily schedule (Nikkei)

Economy:

- 4) GDP growth in July-Sept 2.6 PERCENT . at annualized rate (Nikkei)

Foreign relations:

- 5) --Okada forgoes U.S. trip; Kantei says Diet session more important (Mainichi)
- 6) --Okada forgoes U.S. trip (Sankei)

Defense & security:

- 7) --Japan to postpone Futenma decision (Yomiuri)
- 8) --Hatoyama says dispatch of even a small SDF contingent to Afghanistan would be undesirable (Asahi)

Politics:

- 9) Foreign Minister says stump speech comments don't constitute election pledges (Sankei)
- 10) Haraguchi asks cabinet to work out issues on use of Internet for election campaigns (Asahi)
- 11) Hirano: Cabinet will decide interpretation of Constitution (Nikkei)
- 12) Prime Minister and Chief Cabinet Secretary differ on interpretation of constitution regarding collective self-defense (Mainichi)

Special Diet session:

13) Main exchanges at Lower House Budget Committee meeting (Nikkei)

Articles:

1) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

DPJ Secretary General Ozawa's political organization suspected of having made false reports on donations

Mainichi:

Welfare ministry plans to ease floor space requirements for nursery schools in urban areas to help reduce number of children on waiting lists

Yomiuri:

Diet debate on amakudari (reemployment of retired bureaucrats) practice between ruling, opposition camps; DPJ has shifted to pragmatic policy approach

Nikkei:

Toyota plans to establish research and development center in China as early as next year

Sankei:

Government Revitalization Unit likely to cut expenses for achievement tests

Tokyo Shimbun:

TOKYO 00002549 002 OF 008

Tokyo government intends to carry out Tsukiji Market relocation plan

Akahata:

JCP lawmaker Kasai urges Prime Minister Hatoyama to take Futenma base issue seriously

2) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

- (1) Hatoyama donation scandal: Prime Minister Hatoyama must abide by law
- (2) Reelection of President Karzai: Can he unite his country?

Mainichi:

- (1) Karzai reelected: Priority should be placed on ethnic harmony
- (2) Teachers with insufficient leadership: Education ministry must delve deeper into the problem

Yomiuri:

- (1) Measures to improve quality of teachers: Reform teacher training system after examining its effects
- (2) Karzai reelection: He must unite ethnic groups and fight terrorism

Nikkei:

- (1) Prime Minister Hatoyama must answer questions about false reports on political donations
- (2) Karzai must quickly take action to restore trust

Sankei:

- (1) Cancellation of foreign minister's U.S. visit: "Crisis" between Japan and U.S. must not be neglected
- (2) Political reform: We support a year-round Diet session plan

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) Hike in tobacco prices: Debate on tobacco tax hike should be deepened
- (2) Karzai reelected: Taliban insurgents must go home

Akahata:

- (1) Declassified U.S. diplomatic documents: U.S. pressure on Japan to execute "secret nuclear pact"

3) Prime Minister's schedule, November 4

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 5, 2009

07:17 Arrived at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei).
08:31 Attended a cabinet meeting in the Diet building. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano and deputy chief cabinet secretaries Matsuno and Takino stayed behind.
09:08 Attended a Lower House Budget Committee session.
12:05 Arrived at the Kantei.
13:01 Attended the Lower House Budget Committee session.
17:44 Met Foreign Minister Okada and Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka at the Kantei.
18:03 Met China's Guangdong Province Communist Party Secretary Wang Yang, Chinese Ambassador to Japan Cui Tiankai, and others, with MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Saiki present.
19:12 Attended a ceremony commemorating the 40th anniversary of the

TOKYO 00002549 003 OF 008

Japan National Press Club held in the Japan National Press Club Building in Uchisaiwaicho.

19:50 Watched the Corteo circus show with wife, Miyuki, at the National Yoyogi Stadium Olympic Plaza in Jinnan.
21:59 Arrived at his official residential quarters.

4) Private think tanks project 2.6 PERCENT growth in GDP for July-September period

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Excerpts)
November 5, 2009

Twelve private-sector research institutes have projected that the nation's real gross domestic product (GDP) for the July-September quarter grew at an annualized rate of 2.6 PERCENT over the previous period on average - registering a boost for the second straight quarter following 2.3 PERCENT growth in the April-June period. The institutes have released their respective forecasts prior to the Cabinet Office's announcement of the GDP on Nov. 16. Exports and consumer spending have increased on the back of economic stimulus measures taken in Japan and abroad. Capital investment is also expected to take an upward turn for the first time in six quarters.

According to their forecasts, the GDP for the July-September period would grow 0.6 PERCENT in real terms over the previous period. The economy has been on a recovery track, and this favorable trend is likely to be reflected in the GDP. Even so, policies have greatly contributed to boosting the economy, so there is still concern about the continuity of the economic expansion.

5) Okada forgoes visit to U.S. because of Kantei's giving priority to Diet business

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpt)
November 5, 2009

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada has given up his plan to visit the United States ahead of U.S. President Barack Obama's arrival in Japan on Nov. 12-13 due on account of Diet business. Highly alarmed at confusion over the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture), Okada sounded out Washington on his plan to visit the United States without coordinating views with the Prime Minister's office (Kantei). But Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, who has said he would postpone a decision on Futenma until after Obama's Japan visit, has not changed his stance of giving Diet business priority over other matters. Thus a difference in level of concern between the Kantei and Okada over the Futenma issue has been brought into the open. The cancellation of talks with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, requested by Okada, owing to domestic circumstances is drawing criticism from within the government.

6) Foreign Minister Okada gives up U.S. visit

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 5, 2009

The governments of Japan and the United States decided yesterday to call off a meeting between their foreign ministers. The governments had been carrying out coordination with an eye to holding the meeting on Nov. 6 (Nov. 7 Japan time). Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano announced the cancellation at a press conference on

TOKYO 00002549 004 OF 008

Nov. 4. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada told reporters yesterday evening: "Schedules for budget committee sessions (at the House of Councillors) have not yet been decided. So I gave up the trip. I couldn't cause (the U.S. side) to keep their schedule open indefinitely."

7) Gov't to postpone Futenma decision

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
November 5, 2009

Ahead of U.S. President Obama's visit to Japan on Nov. 12, the Japanese government's course of action for a scheduled summit meeting of Obama and Prime Minister Hatoyama was disclosed yesterday. The summit meeting is expected to focus on the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture. Hatoyama, however, will tell Obama at the summit meeting that he will push back a conclusion on the Futenma issue, for the reason that the Japanese government is still in the process of verifying the circumstances leading to the decision to relocate the Futenma airfield to a coastal area of Camp Schwab, a U.S. military base in the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago.

Hatoyama will meet at his office with Obama on Nov. 13. During the summit meeting, the two leaders will focus their discussion mainly on bilateral relations between Japan and the United States, assistance to Afghanistan for its reconstruction, North Korea's nuclear development programs, nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, and climate change. Bilateral relations have been bumpy because of the pending issue of relocating the heliport functions of Futenma airfield. Against this background, Hatoyama will underscore the bilateral alliance between Japan and the United States. In addition, he would like to confirm bilateral cooperation on Afghan aid. When it comes to the Japan-U.S. alliance, next year marks the 50th anniversary of the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, so Hatoyama will propose bilateral discussions to "deepen the alliance in a multilayered way."

Concerning Japan's aid to Afghanistan, Hatoyama will clarify that Japan will substantially increase financial assistance for such projects as constructing social infrastructure in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Hatoyama will explain that he will "not simply extend" the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean.

On the issue of nuclear disarmament, Hatoyama will express his support for Obama's vow to seek "a world without nuclear weapons." Hatoyama will tell Obama that Japan will also make proactive efforts for nuclear disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation.

Obama will leave Japan on Nov. 13, so he is not expected to visit the atomic-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

8) Hatoyama: Dispatching even a small group of SDF troops to Afghanistan would be undesirable

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
November 5, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama yesterday indicated a negative view about the proposed dispatch of Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops to join an international reconstruction mission in Afghanistan. He told

TOKYO 00002549 005 OF 008

reporters: "Dispatching even a small group of SDF personnel to Afghanistan would be undesirable." The prime minister appears to be

in favor of centering Japan's aid for Afghanistan on civilian aid, including livelihood support for residents. He also said: "I am fully aware that each cabinet minister is mulling what Japan should do for Afghanistan, but I think it is better for the cabinet to come up with a unified (view) on the SDP dispatch."

The Hatoyama cabinet has decided to halt the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean when the refueling mission special measures law expires in January. With an eye on U.S. President Barack Obama's planned visit to Japan on Nov. 12, the Defense Ministry has looked into such plans as sending SDF officials to the headquarters of the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRT), as well as dispatching SDF troops to mainland Afghanistan.

9) Remarks in stump speeches during Lower House campaign "are not campaign pledges," Foreign Minister Okada says at Diet

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 5, 2009

With regard to the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said yesterday before the House of Representatives Budget Committee, "The campaign platform (for the Lower House election) and remarks made (by senior party members) during the election campaign are not equivalent. The campaign platform is the manifesto (set of campaign pledges)." Okada indicated his perception that policies stipulated in the manifesto are campaign pledges, but remarks made on the hustings are not campaign pledges. He was replying to a question by Akira Kasai of the Japanese Communist Party about the discrepancy between Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's comments during the Lower House campaign that it would be desirable to relocate the Futenma base out of Okinawa or out of Japan and the foreign minister's idea of integrating the Futenma base with Kadena Air Base.

10) Issues on allowing use of Internet during election campaigns to be summarized

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
November 5, 2009

Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Kazuhiro Haraguchi indicated at a news conference after a cabinet meeting on Nov. 4 that he has ordered his ministry to summarize the issues on allowing the use of the Internet during election campaigns. The removal of a ban on the use of the Internet during election campaigns was specified in the Democratic Party of Japan's manifesto (campaign pledges). The government plans to make preparations for amending the Public Offices Election Law.

There are strong concerns that the removal of the ban on the use of the Internet might result in spoof candidates and slander. Haraguchi stopped short of mentioning a clear timeline on amending the law. "Parties and floor groups must first discuss the matter thoroughly at the Diet," Haraguchi said, indicating that lawmakers will sponsor a bill.

11) Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano leaves open option of revising constitutional interpretation of right of collective self-defense

TOKYO 00002549 006 OF 008

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 5, 2009

At a news conference on Nov. 4, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said that with regard to the government's constitutional interpretation banning the exercise of the right of collective self-defense, "when the world situation changes drastically, when a such a situation occurs, we will make a judgment at that point in time," leaving open the door to responding to changing circumstances. He added that "the cabinet consisting of the ministers will make the interpretation according to a political decision," emphasizing political leadership.

Previously, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau has, in effect, been making the constitutional interpretations. On this point, Hirano said: "I do not think that the director general of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau should make this judgment. His opinion will not become the government's opinion." He indicated that the director general will only serve as an adviser to the cabinet, saying: "We will tap the director general's knowledge of and opinion on legal matters. The cabinet will make its judgment based on such knowledge."

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama told reporters at the Prime Minister's office (Kantei) on the same day that "I have no intention to change the interpretation of the right of collective self-defense. We should act within the bounds of the government's interpretation and the Constitution," reiterating his negation of the revision of the interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution. He added, "While it is possible to change the interpretation, we need to be extremely careful when doing so."

At a cabinet meeting on the same day the government decided on a response to a written query from New Komeito House of Councillors member Masayoshi Hamada: "The constitutional interpretation remains unchanged at this point."

12) Hatoyama, Hirano have different views about government interpretation of Constitution on collective self-defense

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
November 5, 2009

In replying to questions at a meeting of the House of Representatives Budget Committee yesterday, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said in reference to the current government interpretation of the Constitution, which prohibits the Self-Defense Force from exercising the right to collective self-defense: "I understand that Japan adopted the current interpretation based on its historical background. I have no intention to change it under my administration." Meanwhile, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano expressed a different view from Hatoyama's in a press conference the same day, saying: "When we see a change in the situation, the cabinet will make a decision in a responsible manner." Hatoyama later told reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence: "It doesn't make sense that the view of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau director general should be a golden rule," indicating that the cabinet could change the interpretation based on its own judgment. But he added: "It is also necessary to ascertain public opinion."

13) Gist of PM Hatoyama's and Foreign Minister Okada's responses to
TOKYO 00002549 007 OF 008

interpellation on foreign policy issues at Lower House Budget
Committee on November 4

NIKKEI (Page 4) (Full)
November 5, 2009

Right of collective self-defense

Shigeru Ishiba, chairman of Liberal Democratic Party Policy Research Council: The Prime Minister used to say that providing bases and logistic support (to the U.S.) constitutes exercising the right of collective self-defense. Do you still take that position after becoming prime minister?

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama: The term "right of collective self-defense" itself is ambiguous. It needs to be defined clearly and Japan's basic stance on defense needs to be asserted sooner or later. My cabinet has no intention to change the interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution.

Afghan aid

Ishiba: How effective has the refueling mission of the Maritime Self-Defense Force in the Indian Ocean been?

Hatoyama: The number of logistical support operations has been

decreasing. Contribution to peace and economic rehabilitation in Afghanistan will be much more effective.

Ishiba: Will the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) participate in Afghan aid?

Hatoyama: Manpower contribution is also necessary, but this will be aid involving mostly civilians. I am not thinking of dispatching the SDF.

Ishiba: What is the essence of the war against terrorism?

Hatoyama: It is impossible to eradicate terrorism by armed force alone. Our responsibility is to think seriously about poverty and the religious aspects, and guide their lives.

Futenma issue

Ishiba: If the U.S. Marines are moved outside Okinawa or Japan, do you think the same deterrence can be maintained?

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada: We are currently looking into this. I do not think that deterrence will be lost completely if (the Marines) are not in Okinawa. However, it will depend on the situation and location.

East Asian community

Ishiba: Will the East Asian community include not only economic, but also military aspects?

Okada: The East Asian community is a grand vision for the future. It is unconceivable for a collective security framework like NATO to be created immediately in a situation where there are countries with different political systems. This concept does not include (military elements).

TOKYO 00002549 008 OF 008

Japan-U.S. alliance

Ishiba: The Japan-U.S. alliance is unequal compared to what?

Okada: We are not talking about compared to something else; what we are saying is that Japan should voice its opinions boldly.

Ishiba: Demanding that the U.S. make a commitment to no-first-use of nuclear weapons will mean a serious decline in the United States' nuclear deterrence.

Okada: I told U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that no-first-use of nuclear arms is the general direction for achieving a world without nuclear weapons, but this cannot be done immediately and that we would like to discuss in-depth what can be done right now. I did not demand an immediate commitment to no-first-use.

ROOS